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gree of naturalism permissible in ornament, or to say that the natural rendering may not sometimes be the best. The conditions of the case may determine the elimination of the natural element in design altogether, or permit it to rule paramount; they determine the degree of modification necessary, or the degree of naturalness permissible.

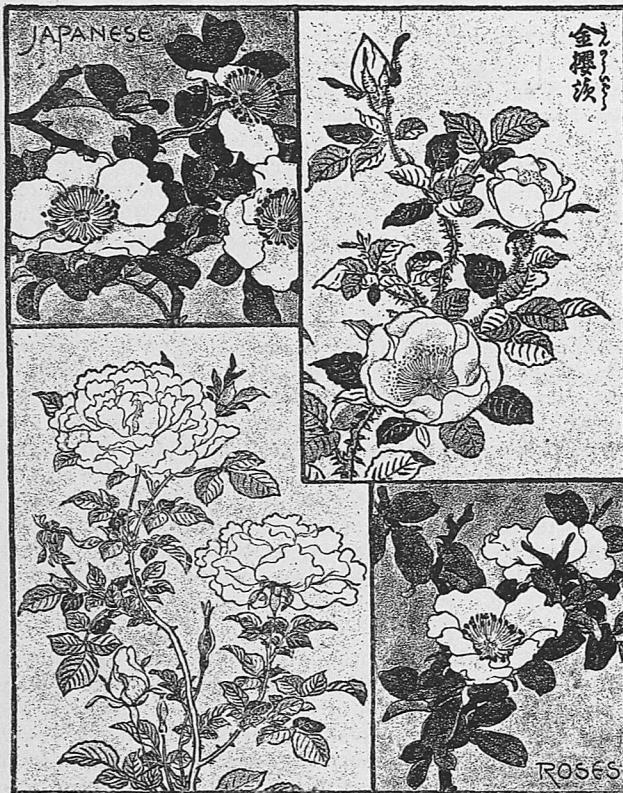


FIG. 11.—JAPANESE ROSES.

And even where they leave the artist free, as soon as ever he begins to design he sets himself in his own limits. He pledges himself by what he has done, and is bound in consistency to carry his idea logically through. A formal arrangement of lines evolves an equally formal kind of foliation, and free growth pledges him to equally natural foliage. So also natural detail prescribes free lines of growth, and conventional detail implies lines proportionately conventional.

If, that is to say, it is proposed to clothe a geometrical skeleton with foliage, it is quite easy to make the turn of the leaves too natural; the danger in the case of a more natural skeleton would be in making them too hard and formal.

(To be continued.)

SILVER and gold hand woven brocades are among the finest productions of the East, and are most desirable for decorative upholstery purposes when peculiarly rich effects are sought after. Some of the designs have a striking and odd effect, combined with dull silks and wools. In a hand embroidered table cover the centre is a circle of scarlet silk embroidered with panels, each containing texts from the Koran. Another is heavily embroidered in gold and silk in various colors. The design consists of a fine floral border running around the edge and the field is spotted with a golden date symbol.

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OLD ENGLISH EMBROIDERY.—II.



EW domestic decorations existed in Europe prior to the age of chivalry. Carpets were spread over the rushes on the floor, and walls were hung with embroidered hangings, and rude benches and tables were covered with dainty needlework. The damp, bare walls of English castles demanded some kind of hangings. Tapestry was not made at Arras until the fourteenth century, so all earlier pictured hangings were the products of the needle. Wall painting seems to have been contemporaneous with tapestry, and hangings wrought by the needle. It was the custom, in absence of needlework, to paint the walls with historical subjects. In 1312 we find the Bishop of Lichfield commanding the great hall of his episcopal palace to be painted with the coronation, marriages, wars, and funeral of his patron, King Edward I. Chaucer refers to this custom of mural paintings:

And soth to faime my chambre was
Ful well depainted—
And all the wals with colours fine.

And again:

On the wals old portraiture
Of horsemen, hawkis and houndis.

The subjects depicted by the brush were portrayed in a more

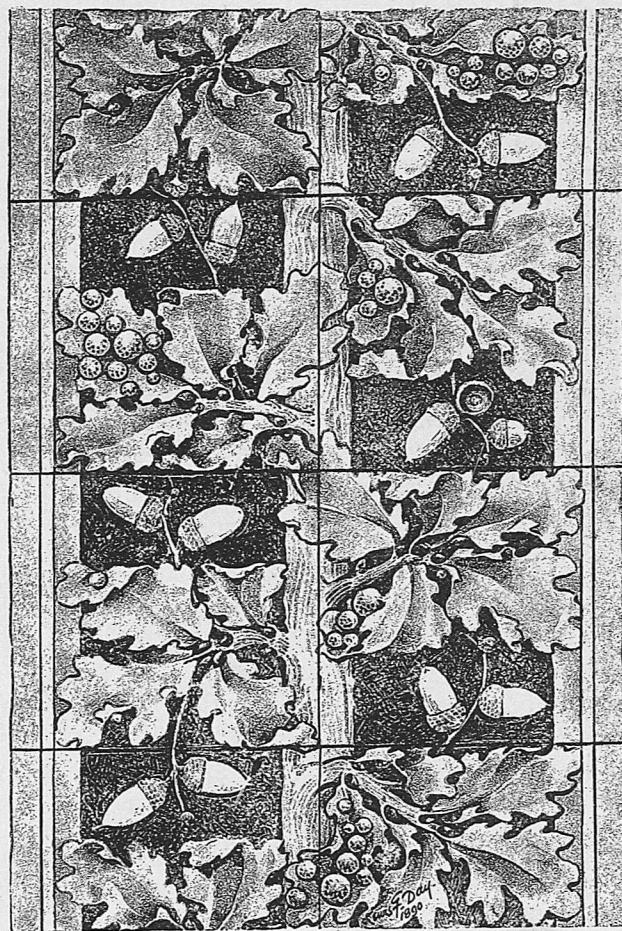


FIG. 12.—TILE PANEL, OAK GALLS.

or less skilful manner by the needle, and later by the lovely productions of the looms of Arras.

The designs of these early hangings were often unskilled and rude, as we see in the Bayeux tapestry; but from the descriptions preserved to us in ancient inventories and State rolls, and in the pages of poets and historians, they must have been very bold and spirited.

The Anglo-Norman ladies, like the Grecian dames of old, were accustomed to embroider the exploits of their husbands and kinsmen on the hangings of their chambers.

Andromache, Homer tell us, at the moment that the cries of distress apprised her of the death of Hector, was working in the secret apartment of her high chamber a cloth resplendent with purple, which she had ornamented with various flowers. Doubtless, during the stormy days of the Crusades, shut up in her lofty chamber, within her gloomy castle walls, the mediæval matron found her chief consolation in representing the heroic deeds of her absent lord. There were few other amusements in which she could wile away the long, lonely hours, or in which her talents could be employed. Apart from the exercise of hawking, it was probably her only recreation.

The women of the middle ages may be well said to have embroidered history. Deeds of chivalry provided them with endless subjects, and the romances of the period, though they sometimes chose more ambitious themes from the classic histories of Greece and Rome. The tale of Troy was a very favorite subject; the whole of the Iliad, we are told, was wrought in skilful needlework; the story of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, and their wondrous achievements, clothed the walls of many a lady's bower with romantic history. The subjects were generally explained by short lines, or mottoes in Provençal or old French. Often the hangings were decorated alone with metrical descriptions, called Proverbs. In Jubinal's beautiful collection of ancient tapestries we see how general this custom was, not only of explaining the subject, but often names are embroidered upon the figures, and beneath the buildings, and across the towns and rivers to identify them.

Domestic embroidery was, doubtless, at this time an important factor in the progress of civilization. Moral and religious lessons, we may be sure, were taught by the dumb pictures that clothed the walls. Young girls of noble families were trained in nunneries in skilful embroidery, not only as an accomplishment, but a household duty. There was so little furniture, and that so very bare in the middle ages, that needlework was the only refinement possible to make a home beautiful. The rich hangings thrown over tables and benches and chairs of state—there was generally only one chair in a room, and this often stood beneath an embroidered canopy—gave the effect of splendour, which at a later time was supplied by carving and its sister arts. A plain board laid upon trestles, formed the dining table, and an ordinary bench or form the seat. Behind the bench was suspended a curtain, and over it was thrown a rich coverlet, "baucaria;" this concealed the barenness. Cushions seem to have been in use from quite the earliest time, and in all old illuminated manuscripts we find them ornamented with embroidery. The seat of state was known as the "faldestol" (fauteuil), and this always had a rich covering. To remedy the want of accommodation for seating visitors in ancient buildings, we find a stone seat projecting from the wall, running sometimes round the room, and divided by arches into compartments to accommodate two or more persons for convenience of conversation.

The hangings of the bedchamber, and especially of the bed itself, seem to have been a subject of much importance, as the chamber in those primitive times was the place for receiving visitors, and the bed usually served for a seat. Indeed, in the early middle ages, there were so few rooms in a house, that visitors slept in the same room as the host and hostess. Curtains to the beds were thus extensively used. Indeed, "Under the curtain" was a term synonymous to being "in bed." The bed coverings of this period appear to have been very rich, especially in the case of Royalty and persons of rank. Stow speaks of a counterpane worth a thousand marks. The beds of the period, we learn from Neckham, were covered much in the same way as at the present time, except that the sheets were sometimes of white silk. The coverlet, or quilte pointe, courte pointe, or counterpointe, was composed of green say, a woolen material, though we learn from old inventories that richer materials were used.

In the "Lai del Désiré" we are told of a coilte (quilt) made in checker wise of pieces of different sorts of rich stuffs—early patchwork. In the "Romance of Arthur of Lytel Brytayne" is a very curious description of a chamber with its bedstead and hangings. The latter are described as being of "grene sandall, wyronded with gold and azure, and round about this bedde there laye carpettes of sylke embrowdred with ymages of gold. The four square pillowes wrought among the Sarasyns. Upon this bed was a rich quylt wrought with coton, with crimson sendel, stitched with thredes of gold, and shetes of whyte

sylke." This will give an idea of the bed draperies of the time of Edward II.

PORTIERES and curtains may be cheaply made of ingrain carpet embroidered, Turkish or Indian stuffs, splendid Delhi pulgasies (a mass of gold silk embroidered with bits of looking glass worked in) velvet, camel's hair shawls, satin, chintz, cretonne. "As costly thy portieres as thy purse can buy." Nothing so pretty and so ornamental.

BRASS beds are recommended as cleanly, handsome and durable. Many ladies have, however, found fault with them, because they show the under mattress where the clothes are tucked in over the upper one. This can be remedied by making a valance, which is finished with a ruffle at the top, which can be fluted, and the whole tied on by tapes. Two or three of these will be all that a housekeeper needs if white, or they may be in merino, in colors to match the room.

FOR a yellow room, the wall may be covered with a pale yellow paper, with a deep frieze of daffodils, narcissus, etc., on a cream ground. Plain yellow matting, and for winter, black fur rugs have an excellent effect with it. The couch in this room may have a cover of cretonne in a pale yellow ground with large yellow flowers, and pillows for the back of the same. The furniture may be either of willow, or of plain white. The shelf over the mantle-piece is five feet from the floor, and this is draped with a pale yellow scarf, and holds an engraving and some pieces of china in yellow. All the china is yellow or white, and the table covers are white with yellow silk embroidery.

A PRETTY boudoir has the walls in blue, with figures in white in geometrical designs. The ceiling is painted white, with a frieze of light blue and white. In the corner stands a bed of white enamel and brass, over which is thrown an exquisite white spread. The floor is covered with a rich carpet in fawn and white. In another corner stands a dresser in polished oak, with a beveled glass mirror, on which are tastefully arranged on a pretty scarf, pieces of silver and a manicure set in frosted silver. On the walls are hung some very pretty etchings. In the center of the room is a table, over which is thrown a beautiful scarf of light blue silk. The windows are hung with curtains of silk corresponding in color with the rest of the room. The furniture pieces, no two of which are alike, are all in light woods, and altogether it is an exquisitely light and cheerful boudoir.

To any one acquainted, for instance, with human anatomy what could be more offensive than an ill-drawn limb? So, deeply felt is such offense that it hinders many men from appreciating the fine sentiment that underlies the archiac drawing of the early masters. A person who is completely ignorant of anatomy or physiology may yet fully appreciate Fra Angelico or Benozzo Gozzoli, but it will not be contended that such gratification compensates for the ignorance.

In the same way the rude patches of white and blue that stand for clouds in the tapestry appear so childish to any one conversant with the habits of real clouds and their beauty, and he feels hurt, and his mind is unbalanced and unfitted to do justice to the true merits of the sentiment of the old designer.

I suppose no one knew any more about clouds than about ghosts, or about the structure of the solar system, or about the nebular hypothesis; so that no distortion gave any offence. But such an untrodden field of innocence is now irrecoverable, of affection or the mask of incompetence.

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